

Message Text

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70

ACTION AF-18

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FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9251

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABIDJAN 5422

E O 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IV

SUBJ: FURTHER ON MINISTERIAL CHANGES

REF: ABIDJAN 5160

1. TALK CONTINUES UNABATED IN ABIDJAN ABOUT MINISTERIAL AND OTHER CHANGES. MINISTERS, PARTICULARLY THE SENIOR ONES, ARE REPORTEDLY STILL NOT PERMITTED TO LEAVE IVORY COAST BY PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY EXCEPT FOR VERY SPECIAL REASONS, ACCORDING TO SEVERAL SOURCES.

2. RUMORS AS TO DATE OF ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW MINISTERIAL LINE-UP VARY. IT IS THOUGHT THAT ARRIVAL OF FRENCH MINISTER FOR COOPERATION ABELIN JULY 3 FOR BRIEF VISIT THREW OFF TIMING, ACCORDING TO ONE SOURCE, WHO CLAIMS, AS DO OTHERS, THAT HOUPHOUET IS NOW AIMING TO MAKE ANNOUNCEMENT JULY 15. ONE FON MIN OFFICIAL IN A POSITION TO KNOW STATES THE MINISTRY HAS BEEN ASKED TO LOCATE AMBASSADORIAL SPOTS FOR SEVERAL DEPARTING MINISTERS.

3. ACCORDING TO ANOTHER FOR MIN OFFICIAL, A SEC STATE FOR COOPERATION WILL BE CREATED WITHIN THAT MINISTRY. REASON IS TO GIVE COOPERATION BOTH GREATER EMPHASIS AND MORE CAREFUL ATTENTION THAN IT HAS HAD AS AN OFFICE, AIMING IN PART TO TIGHTEN UP ON FRENCH COOPERATION ASSISTANCE AND PERSONNEL.

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4. AT SAME TIME AS THERE COULD BE MINISTERIAL CHANGES THERE WILL ALSO BE A GREAT SHAKE-UP IN LOCAL OFFICIALS AROUND THE COUNTRY. HOUPHOUET PROMISED ON HIS NORTHERN TRIPS THAT PREFECTS WOULD BE NAMED FOR THOSE DEPARTMENTS WITHOUT THEM AND SOUS-PREFECTS NAMED FOR THE NEWLY CREATED SOUS-PREFECTURES, ALL IN JULY. THIS IN ITSELF WOULD ENTAIL CHANGES, BUT THERE ARE ALSO A NUMBER OF OTHER LOCAL OFFICIALS AROUND THE COUNTRY WHO HAVE BEEN IN THEIR POSTS FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS WHOSE REASSIGNMENT IS LONG OVERDUE. THUS, THE RESHUFFLE SHOULD BE AN IMPORTANT ONE.

5. IN THE MIDST OF ALL OF THESE PROSPECTS FOR CHANGE THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WAS CALLED INTO SECRET SESSION JULY 1. EVERYTHING HAS BEEN HELD CLOSELY BUT EMBASSY HAS HEARD FROM ONE OFFICIAL THAT DEPUTIES WERE TOLD BY PRESIDENT YACE THAT, WITH CHANGES OF MINISTERS AND LOCAL OFFICIALS COMING SHORTLY, WITH GREAT EXPENDITURES BEGINNING FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS EFFORTS, WITH PDCI CONGRESS COMING UP NEXT YEAR, AND WITH PRESIDENTIAL, NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, AND PARTY ELECTIONS SCHEDULED FOR 1975, THEIR ROLE IS TO KEEP THE COUNTRY CALM.
SMITH

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